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## **Press Release**

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Patty Sly (908) 879-6737 ext 104  
December 19, 2006

### ***HIGHLANDS COUNCIL EXTENDS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD***

Chester, NJ- The New Jersey Highlands Council has extended the official period for receiving comments on its draft Regional Master Plan. An additional 30 days has been added to the period which will now close on March 2, 2007. Numerous individuals and groups have appealed to the Council for the extension, citing the overlap with the holiday season and the draft Plan's length and level of detail.

"We want to be sure that anyone concerned about the future of the Highlands has time to review the draft Plan and give us their thoughts," said Council Chairman John Weingart. "While we want to move ahead to adopt a final Plan as quickly as possible, by extending the comment period we will benefit from helpful suggestions that will ultimately strengthen the Plan."

The draft Regional Master Plan was released on November 30<sup>th</sup> for public comment. The Plan is a comprehensive, science-based plan, designed to safeguard New Jersey's most significant source of drinking water.

Comments are welcomed from all interested parties via email, mail, or by speaking at one of the public hearings. Equal consideration will be given to comments regardless of how they are received. The hearing schedule, which can be found on the Council's web site at [www.highlands.state.nj.us](http://www.highlands.state.nj.us), is as follows:

Tuesday 1/9/07, 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm, Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Morristown

Wednesday 1/10/07, 4:00 pm, Ramapo College, Mahwah

Thursday 1/11/07, 4:00 pm, Warren County Technical School, Washington

Wednesday 1/17/07, 4:00 pm, Voorhees High School, Glen Gardner

Thursday 1/18/07, 4:00 pm, Sussex County Technical School, Sparta

Wednesday 1/24/07, 10:00 am, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton

An additional hearing is being scheduled in Somerset County.

*In August 2004, the New Jersey Legislature enacted the Highland Water Protection and Planning Act in order to protect over 850,000 acres which supply drinking water for more than sixty-five percent of New Jersey's residents. The Highlands Act created the Highlands Council as a regional planning entity charged with protecting the water resources and natural beauty of the New Jersey Highlands while allowing for planned, sustainable development and redevelopment of the region. The fifteen Council members include a broad and representative range of elected officials from Highlands municipalities and counties, as well as individuals with diverse backgrounds and area perspectives.*